

GRADE 8

Summer Reading List

All students entering Grade 8 will read the required book, Nothing But The Truth. Additionally, students will be expected to read at least two books from the Choice List.

REQUIRED SUMMER READING BOOK FOR ALL STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 8

Nothing But The Truth by Avi

Ninth grader Philip Malloy finds himself unable to participate on the track team because of his failing grade in English. Convinced the teacher, Margaret Narwin, dislikes him, he concocts a scheme to get transferred from her homeroom: instead of standing "at respectful, silent attention" during the national anthem, Philip hums.

Choose Two books from this list

Fantasy

The Amber Spyglass, by Phillip Pullman - CHALLENGING

From the very start of its very first scene, *The Amber Spyglass* will set hearts fluttering and minds racing. We immediately discover who captured Lyra at the end of *The Subtle Knife*, though we've yet to discern whether this individual's intent is good, evil, or somewhere in between.

Castle in the Air by Diana Wynne Jones - CHALLENGING

Abdullah the rug merchant leaves his humdrum life far behind when he purchases a threadbare magic carpet from a mysterious stranger. Almost immediately, Abdullah is whisked off on a series of adventures that bear an uncanny resemblance to his own daydreams.

Howl's Moving Castle by Diana Wynne Jones - CHALLENGING

In this giant jigsaw puzzle of a fantasy, people and things are never quite what they seem. Destinies are intertwined, identities exchanged, lovers confused. The Witch has placed a spell on Howl. Does the clue to breaking it lie in a famous poem?

Sang Spell by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor – AVERAGE

Josh begins to realize that Canara is far stranger than just an isolated community passed over by time. How can hills and trees shift in place, and even buildings appear and then vanish? Why can't he escape from Canara? And does he really want to?

Science Fiction

House of the Scorpion by Nancy Farmer - AVERAGE

This is the empire of Matteo Alacran, a feudal drug lord in the country of Opium, which lies between the United States and Aztlan, formerly Mexico. Field work, or any menial tasks, are done by "eejits," humans in whose brains computer chips have been installed to insure docility.

The Time Machine by H.G.Wells - AVERAGE

This book is a science fiction classic in every sense of the word. This book proves that science fiction does not necessarily need to be heavily technical but does need

to deal with grand themes such as the nature of society; man's hopes, dreams, and fears; and the very humanity of man.

Fiction

The Adventure of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain - CHALLENGING

Like many young people, Tom would rather be having fun than going to school and church. This is always getting him into trouble, from which he finds unusual solutions. One of the great scenes in this book has Tom persuading his friends to help him whitewash a fence by making them think that nothing could be finer than doing his punishment for playing hooky from school.

California Blue by D.Klass - AVERAGE

A 17-year-old loner with a passion for nature discovers a new species of butterfly in the old-growth forest near his home and is thrust headlong into the battle between environmentalists and the timber industry. A gripping story of a young man holding on to personal convictions in spite of family and community pressure.

Monster by Walter Dean Meyers - AVERAGE

"Monster" is what the prosecutor called 16-year-old Steve Harmon for his supposed role in the fatal shooting of a convenience-store owner. But was Steve really the lookout who gave the "all clear" to the murderer, or was he just in the wrong place at the wrong time?

Moves Make the Man by Bruce Brooks - AVERAGE

Jerome Foxworthy -- the Jayfox to his friends -- likes to think he can handle anything. He handled growing up without a father. He handled being the first black kid in school. And he sure can handle a basketball.

Rumble Fish by S.E. Hinton - EASY

A junior high school boy idolizes his older brother, the coolest, toughest guy in the neighborhood, and wants to be just like him.

The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle by Avi - AVERAGE

Not every thirteen-year-old girl is accused of murder, brought to trial, and found guilty. But I was just such a girl, and my story is worth relating even if it did happen years ago. Be warned, however: If strong ideas and action offend you, read no more. Find another companion to share your idle hours. For my part I intend to tell the truth as I lived it.

Whirligig by Paul Fleischman - AVERAGE

When sixteen-year-old Brent Bishop inadvertently causes the death of a young woman, he is sent on an unusual journey of repentance, building wind toys across the land.

The Wreckers by Iain Lawrence - EASY

There was once a village bred by evil. On the barren coast of Cornwall, England there lived a community who prayed for shipwrecks, a community who lured storm-tossed ships to crash upon the sharp rocks of their shore. They fed and clothed themselves with the loot salvaged from the wreckage; dead sailors' tools and trinkets became decorations for their homes. Most never questioned their murderous way of life.

Historical Fiction

Cold Sassy Tree by Olive Ann Burns - CHALLENGING

The one thing you can depend on in Cold Sassy, Georgia, is that word gets around - fast. When Grandpa E. Rucker Blakeslee announces one July morning in 1906 that he's aiming to marry the young and freckled milliner, Miss Love Simpson - a bare three weeks after Granny Blakeslee has gone to her reward - the news is served up all over town with that afternoon's dinner.

Earthquake at Dawn by Kristina Gregory - AVERAGE

About to embark on a trip around the world, Edith and her maid are instead swept up in the disorder and turmoil generated by the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. The two young women find themselves stranded in the city, initially in search of Edith's father but ultimately trying to survive and help other displaced residents. Edith, a character based on the real photographer Edith Irvine, captures their harrowing adventures on film.

Jason's Gold by Will Hobbs - EASY

Fifteen-year-old Jason first hears about the discovery of gold in the Klondike while working as a paperboy in New York. He quickly rushes to Seattle to meet up with his brothers, only to find that they have left for the Yukon without him. As he goes the trip alone, adventures pile up.

The Midwife's Apprentice by Karen Cushman - EASY

The story takes place in medieval England. The protagonist is Alyce, who rises from the dung heap (literally) of homelessness and namelessness to find a station in life - apprentice to the crotchety, snaggletooth midwife Jane Sharp.

Milkweed by Jerry Spinelli - AVERAGE

Newbery Medal-winning author Jerry Spinelli paints a vivid picture of the streets of the Nazi-occupied Warsaw during World War II, as seen through the eyes of a curious, kind, heartbreakingly naïve orphan with many names.

Nine Days a Queen by Ann Rinaldi - CHALLENGING

Lady Jane became a pawn in the complex game of political maneuvers, until, with the death of King Edward VI, she was forced to accept the throne as a move to block Mary and her Catholic supporters. When Mary's right to the throne was recognized, she had 16-year-old Jane beheaded.

The Ramsey Scallop by Frances Temple - AVERAGE

Thirteenth century couple, Elenor and Tom, overcomes their reluctance to marry after they are sent on a pre-nuptial journey to Spain and learn more about the world and each other.

Coming of Age - Fiction

Crash by Jerry Spinelli - EASY

Ever since first grade "Crash" Coogan has been tormenting dweeby Penn Ward, a skinny vegetarian Quaker boy who lives in a tiny former garage with his aged parents. Now that they're in seventh grade, "chippy chirpy perky" Penn becomes an even better target: he joins the cheerleading squad.

The Misfits by James Howe – EASY

The four "misfits" are slightly larger than life wiser than their years, worldlier than the small town setting would suggest, and remarkably well-adjusted but there remains much authenticity in the story's message about preadolescent stereotyping and the devastating effects of degrading labels. An upbeat, reassuring novel that encourages preteens and teens to celebrate their individuality.

Olive's Ocean by Kevin Henkes – AVERAGE

More than anything Martha wants to be a writer. The problem is that her father does, too. Is there room for two writers in a single family? This is only one of the many questions that beg to be answered during Martha's twelfth summer. Here are others: Is Godbee, the paternal grandmother whom the family is visiting at Cape Cod, dying? Why is Martha's father so angry? Could Jimmy, the eldest of the five neighboring Manning brothers, be falling in love with her (and vice-versa)? And what does all this have to do with Olive, Martha's mysterious classmate, who died after being hit by a car weeks earlier?

Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli - CHALLENGING

"She was home schooling gone amok." "She was an alien." "Her parents were circus acrobats." These are only a few of the theories concocted to explain Stargirl Caraway, a new 10th grader at Arizona's Mica Area High School who wears pioneer dresses and kimonos to school, strums a ukulele in the cafeteria, laughs when there are no jokes, and dances when there is no music.

Mystery

The Hideout by Eve Bunting – EASY

Twelve-year-old Andy feels he would be better off with his father in England than in his San Francisco home with his mother and her new husband. To raise the money needed to finance his trip to England, he stages his own kidnapping, but the plan backfires when someone decides to make the kidnapping a reality.

I Know What You Did Last Summer by Lois Duncan - CHALLENGING

It was only an accident -- but it would change their lives forever. Last summer, four terrified friends made a desperate pact to conceal a shocking secret. But some secrets don't stay buried, and someone has learned the truth. Someone bent on revenge. This summer, the horror is only beginning...

Trouble With Lemons by Daniel Hayes - AVERAGE

His real name was Tyler McAllister, but he felt like a lemon. He had allergies and nightmares, and was the only unfamous person in his family. But one night he and a friend went swimming at the forbidden quarry, and Tyler found a dead body. Now he's determined to find out who killed the man and why they're now after him....

Non-Fiction (Not leveled)

An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793 by Jim Murphy

If surviving the first 20 years of a new nationhood weren't challenge enough, the yellow fever epidemic of 1793, centering in Philadelphia, was a crisis of monumental proportions. Murphy chronicles this frightening time with solid research and a flair for weaving facts into fascinating stories, beginning with the fever's emergence on August 3, when a young French sailor died in Richard Denny's boardinghouse on North Water Street.

Police Lab: How Forensic Science Tracks Down and Convicts Criminals by David Owen

Police Lab shows how forensic scientists gather and analyze evidence, examine weapons and bodies and use DNA testing and other techniques to help solve crimes. Twenty real-life case studies show forensic scientists in action and demonstrate the fascinating secrets of police labs.

Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World by Jennifer Armstrong

As Shackleton and 27 sailors attempted to cross the frozen Antarctic continent from one side to the other, they were trapped in an ice pack, lost their ship to the icy depths, survived an Antarctic winter, escaped attacks from sea lions, and traversed 600 treacherous miles to the uninhabited Elephant Island.

Biography

Babe Didrickson Zaharias by Russell Freedman

A bold tomboy Texan from a poor family, Babe saw sports as a way to earn recognition, respect and a living, something almost unheard of for a woman at the time. Using quotations from friends, rivals and Zaharias herself, as well as a bounty of period photographs, Freedman brings her irrepressible personality leaping from the page.